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Masters of Persian Music Perform at Cleveland Museum of Art Oct. 4

"It is almost impossible to translate the significance of the tour." — *Boston Globe*

CLEVELAND (Sept. 16, 2002) — The Masters of Persian Music, a superstar lineup of Iran's most renowned musicians, will come together for an 18-city North American tour beginning Oct. 4 at the Cleveland Museum of Art. This performance will be the only one in the Midwest.

Part of the Museum's **VIVA! Festival of Performing Arts**, this concert of music based on Persian poetry will take place in Gartner Auditorium Friday, Oct. 4, 2002, at 7:30 p.m.

Tickets are available for $35 and $31 and may be purchased by phone at **1-888-CMA-0033** or online at **www.ClevelandArt.org**.

The ensemble's 2001 tour, including a world premier performance at the Cleveland Museum of Art, created such unprecedented audience turnout and media attention that a CD and follow-up tour were immediately scheduled. Massoud Saidpour, the Cleveland Museum of Art's artistic director of performing arts, notes: "Western audiences' interest in Persian music has been growing steadily, along with awareness of Persia's fascinating ancient cultural history. The enormous success of Iranian films, poetry (Molavi Rumi is the world's best-selling poet), art and music makes the Masters of Persian Music tour timely."

M.R. Shajarian, the "Pavarotti of Persian classical music" (*Toronto Globe and Mail)*, will perform with two legendary instrumentalists, Hossein Alizadeh (*tar* or lute) and Kayhan Kalhor (*kamanche* or spike fiddle), along with rising star of Persian classical music Homayoun Shajarian.

A recipient of the prestigious UNESCO Picasso Award, which recognizes musicians who have contributed to peace, dialogue and international cooperation, M.R. Shajarian is considered the most important figure in Persian classical singing. He is revered by millions of Iranians who attend his concerts and buy his recordings. Notes Saidpour: "His deep knowledge and remarkable interpretations of Persian literary works, plus his seemingly limitless vocal range have made him a national treasure."

Hossein Alizadeh is internationally known for his groundbreaking musical compositions for orchestra and film. In 2000, Iran's Ministry of Culture named him Iran's most important contemporary artist. He performs across the globe and has conducted and performed as a soloist with the Iranian National Radio and Television Orchestra. He has taught at the University of Tehran and the California Institute of the Arts.

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Virtuoso *kamanche* player Kayhan Kalhor is renowned for his innovative interpretations of traditional Persian repertoire. He is a featured composer and performer for Yo-Yo Ma's "Silk Road Project" and has composed works for the Kronos Quartet. He founded the Indo-Persian music ensemble Ghazal and is a founding member of the Dastan Ensemble — one of the most important Persian classical music ensembles performing today.

Homayoun Shajarian, the son of M.R. Shajarian, has accompanied his father on percussion and vocals at concerts around the world. As a child prodigy, Homayoun began his studies under his father's supervision. According to Saidpour, "Homayoun's vast vocal range and warm singing style are strikingly similar to his father's and have made him a rising star of Persian classical singing."

The Museum receives operating support from the Ohio Arts Council. Promotional support for VIVA! is provided by WNWV The Wave 107.3.

The Cleveland Museum of Art is one of America's leading comprehensive museums. Its permanent collection is world renowned for its quality and breadth, spanning 5,000 years. The museum is a pivotal international forum for exhibitions, scholarship and art acquisitions. For more information on the museum, its holdings, programs, services and events, call 1-888-CMA-0033 or visit www.ClevelandArt.org.

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